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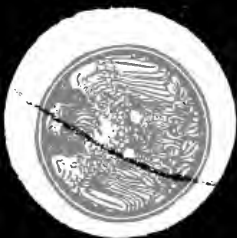
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Our Gleaming Days

DANIEL SARGENT





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OUR GLEAMING DAYS

DANIEL SARGENT



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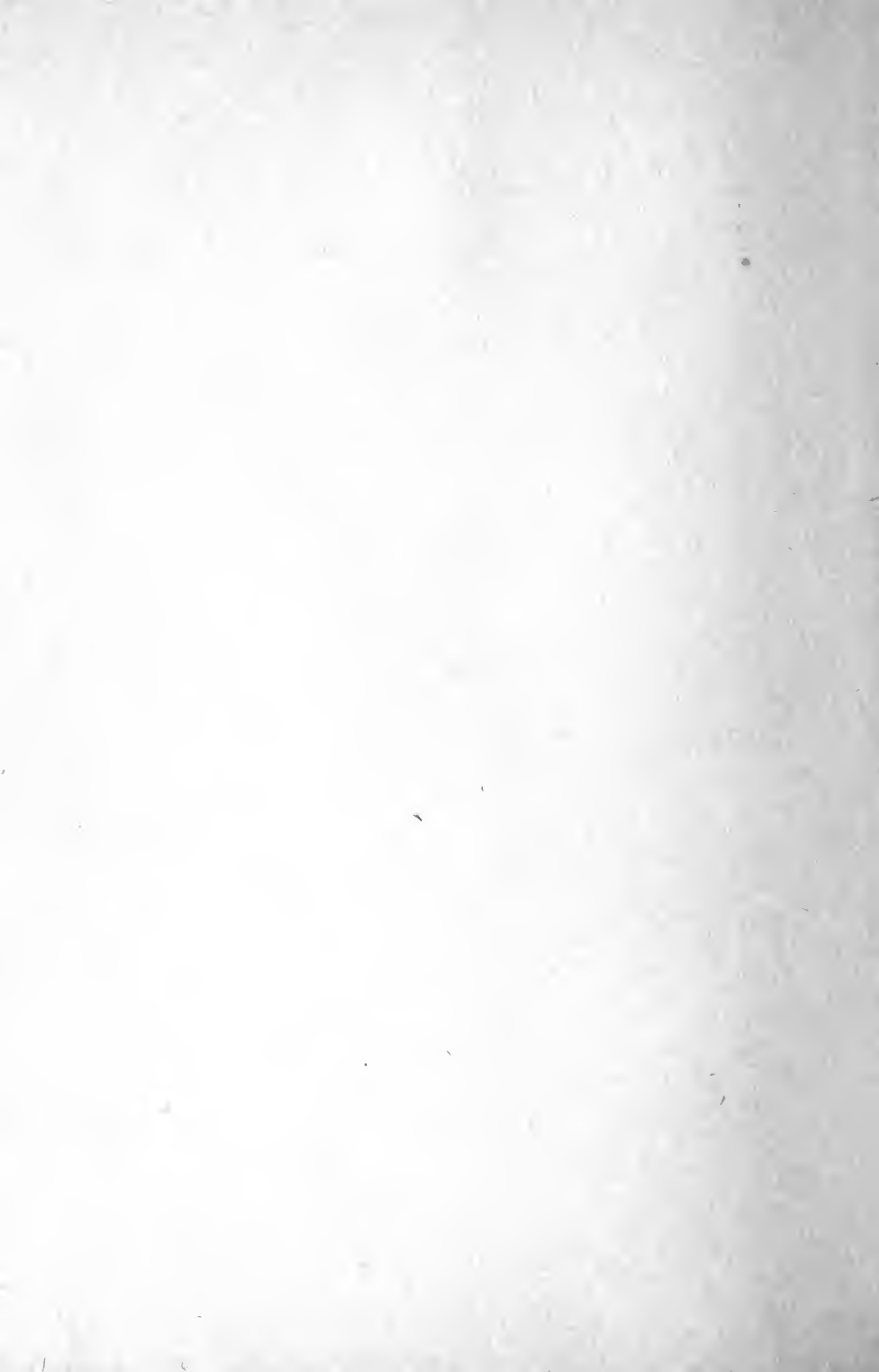
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DEDICATION

*I drink this cup to all the things that burn:
To fire, to art, to truth, but most to men;
And by the selfsame pledge I hereby spurn
All things that can not die to rise again.*



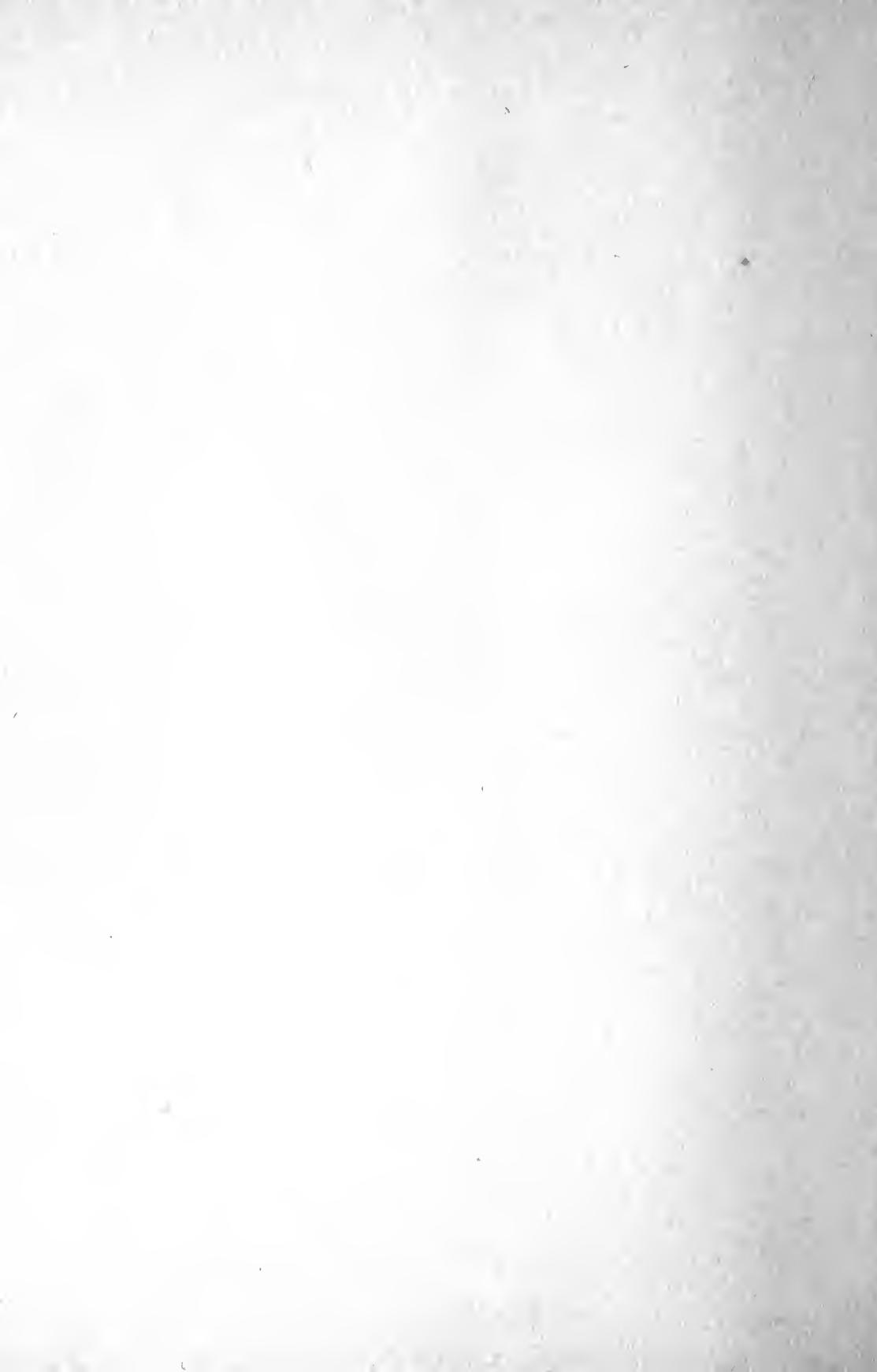
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OUR GLEAMING DAYS



IN PURE PRIMEVAL MELODY

The heavens with their stars still turn
In pure primeval melody,
And bright the stainless dawns burn
Eternally, eternally;
And what the new-born poet sings
Of unheard new-found radiant things
Shall join the ancient changeless harmony.

ALL OF US GIVEN A SONG TO SING

All of us given a song to sing,
Comrades all are we;
The black, and the white, and the yellow, and
red,
Singing by land and sea,
Singing our songs of wonder and joy,
Of sorrow and agony.

Singing our songs of heaven and hell,
Of dark and the blinding light,
Singing our voyages, our fires,
Our dreams of the starry night—
For each hath a song that his heart must sing
Though his lips be sealèd tight.

And the Hindoo sings with his calm limbs
crossed,
And his eyes turned into his soul,
And his song it tells of a perfect peace
Where the gaze is one with its goal,
For he that reaches to grasp his love
On the potter's wheel shall roll.

And the white fool goes to the end of the earth
Seeking the fountains of youth,
And it must be a song that leads him on
A song in his heart, forsooth,
For they with an eye can plainly see
He has turned his back on the truth.

For each man has a song of his own,
That nobody else may hear,
And each song has its smile of bliss,
And each song has its tear,
And each song singeth day and night,
For God is ever near.

So hark ye then to the songs of the world,
To the songs of the yellow and red,
Of the white and the black; before them all
Let us listen, and bow our head,
For the longing to sing that makes us one,
Till the voice of the singer is dead.

THE SONG OF SONGS

Live many years, but speak them in one word;
See all the world, but know it in one star;
Feel all the pangs which through mankind have
stirred;
Then sing the song of all the songs that are.

THE SEASONS

The doors of the Spring swing open wide;
Into a shining world we ride
Where the glad birds sing what our hearts would
say,
And the warm wind driveth the clouds away,
And this is all that we know today:
“Bright, bright, bright is the sun.”

Under the rainbow to summer skies—
And we know like a flash “This is Paradise,”
For here are the flowers that never fade,
And we laugh through the fields and sing through
the shade—
Surely the secret of life is betrayed:
“Bright, bright, bright is the sun.”

And over the rim of the summer’s day,
(There are skies beyond) so we gallop away:
Straight on;—and what though the flowers die,
And the leaves fall down as the wind blows by,
Still it is true that high in the sky,
“Bright, bright, bright is the sun.”

So on, till a-sudden the fields of snow!
And numb cheeks find how the cold winds blow,
And we beat our hands, till the fingers burn.
Are there skies beyond? Yet we never turn,
For this is all that a man can learn:
“Bright, bright, bright is the sun!”

THE UPLANDS

This hour needs the uplands for its feet:
High in the winds which sweep from sky to sky
And belly out the sails of that proud fleet
Of vast mid-ocean clouds which voyage by.

This hour needs the sweet fern and the sun
And sight of distant hills, and fields between,
And one bright slender stream to run
Its silver ribbon through the valley green.

This hour needs the earth-love and the sky
And kinship with the winds' high ecstasy,
And with sweet heather, and with birds that fly,
And with the sun's heaven-fired divinity.

TO PARADISE

O will you come to Paradise
And up the stairs with me?
I'll tell you many thousand things
You never thought could be.
I'll show you what I tried to say
And you will have to smile.
O come with me to Paradise;
We'll stay there for a while.

I THANK THE MEN WHO DIE

When houses are black, and sunsets red,
And the street-lamps wink and are bright,
I walk through the city streets and think
On the coming of the night,
An old, old thought of stars and a moon,
And the mystery of sight.

I think how many gleaming lives
From nations dark and far,
Burned through the lanthorns of their day
And leaping to a star
Now make it shine within the sky
So brightly on our war.

I thank the nations that they rose
To make this star shine bright,
That Greece achieved its Parthenon
Upon its hallowed height,
And that Rome ruled the subject world
With its majestic might.

And so I walk the city streets
Under a starry sky,
And there I see a million years
Bright in the heavens high,
And I thank the stars and I thank the years,
And I thank the men who die.

LEST WE FORGET THE WAYS O' THE
WIND

Lest we forget the ways o' the wind,
And raise our hand to a star,
Lest we forget the ways o' the wind,
Reaching to touch a star,—
Thou hast danced on our forest-paths below
Like a ray of the sun at play,
And only the will o' the wisp can know
The mysteries of thy way;
And thy touch is so soft, and thy step is so
light
That scarcely the world has heard:
Can the air of the heavens so azure bright
Feel the swift wings of a bird?
All that we learn the ways o' the wind,
Nor raise our hand to a star,
The wondrous secret ways o' the wind
And the perfect light of a star.

SONG OF THE DAY

Swiftly, swiftly rideth the horseman Night
High on his coal-black charger over the sea,
Over the plain and over the mountain height,
For out of the East he cometh, he cometh to me.

A thousand stars, a moon adrift in the sky,
A hush through the world, and he taketh me to
his side,
He holdeth me fast, under his cloak I lie,
And over the edge of the world we ride, we ride.

THE BLIND-EYED GONDOLIER

Dark is the city's sleep tonight, but lights swarm
in its dreams,
And though its eyes are closed it feels the touch
of silver beams.
For lo, the moon amid the stars has brightly found
its place
Above the campanile's tower watching with shining
face.
Now down it looks on a gondola which through
the silence slides
Out of dark shadow, crossing a light, over the sea
it glides
Until it shoots in a shower of stars that quiver
within the deep;
No wonder down in the gondola two hearts from
their sloth upleap.
Thus through the city's dreams they went,
While to the sweep behind them bent
The blind-eyed gondolier.

He dipped the long and shining blade so softly
in the sea
You scarcely heard the ripples wake, they spread
so stealthily.
For many years had taught him well, into the
soul of night
To steer two unknown souls like these, two sha-
dows in his sight.
They never changed, these faithful stars, these
figures were the same,
Year in, year out, all beautiful, he thanked them
that they came.

A thousand nights like this he knew
And out the dripping blade he drew;
The blind-eyed gondolier.

But you, be not of little faith, chilled by the long
defeat,
This night is yours, both sea and land lie subject
at your feet.
This universe at your command, bowed to your
birth-right power
Utters eternally your bliss for this sufficing hour.
So crown your foreheads with the stars, and on
your shoulders cast
The purple mantle of the night—your kingdom
came at last.
But now he stoops to poise the oar,
Thinking of such nights still in store,
The blind-eyed gondolier.

THE OPEN FIELD

For those oppressed by crabbed care
God spread the open fields of sky,
Above their narrow streets, the air,
The azure trackless plains on high.

That each man prisoned in his fate
Of fettered task and little hearth
May in the wind-free realms, elate,
Laugh at the pin-fold of this earth,

And climb upon the sun-lit cloud
Or soar like eagle through the blue,
Or shield his eye to see the proud
Immortal day sink out of view.

And he may fly high up to God,
Up past the purple hours of stars,
And gaze at where the dead have trod
Their calm above our throbbing wars.

And when one meets another there
They that were foes shall clasp their
hands
In the sun-dizzy realms of air,
On the sun-set clouds, in the star-lit lands.

THE BRIGHTNESS

The brightness of our ring of dawns
Of sun-gold, and star-fire,
Of western embers ere they fade
Shooting their red flames higher;

The brightness of the wonder gleam
Cast even on our tears,
And those cold Northern Lights that lit
The mystery of fears;

The brightness of the ruddy sparks
Struck from the flint of fate,
And ever ahead the hope-torch bright
Burning above death's gate;

We'll bathe our souls in all this light
And through the truthless ways
On past the unborn in their dark
We'll praise our living days.

THE RED FLAME

“Ed ellu é bellu e jocondu e robostosu e forte.”
St. Francis.

Could not a man grow wise beside this fire?
The ancient book upon the shelf is cold,
But this red flame, hark, how it crackles higher,
And all its changing heart it doth unfold.

For now it tears itself to ribbons bright
And now it nods, as if it bowed at you,
Till suddenly it bursts again in flight—
One madding tongue that licks the sooty flue.

And then its jestings and its ribaldries,
And its soft prayers, and its warm heart-felt
songs
And then its placid lambent gaities—
And lustily it laughs at all its wrongs.

I know you sail for truth across the seas,
But may I sit and listen to this friend?
Yea, take the heavy volume if you please,
But which will be the wiser in the end?

AND THIS SHALL MAKE US FREE

Ever a road beneath our feet,
Over our heads a sky,
Though we climb the purple hills to greet
The heaven for which men die.

For wisdoms come and wisdoms go,
As we pass from land to land,
But this is the only truth we know,
And this shall ever stand,

And this shall make all knowledge one,
And this shall make us free:
That over the mountain comes the sun,
And it shines on you and me.

THY DARK EYES

Come, O come with me away,
For a heaven I have made
Where the world shall leave its clay
And shall glitter new-arrayed,
But thy dark eyes bring with thee,
Else this realm could never be.

THE EYE IS THE LIGHT OF THE BODY

Ye that let the poet die,
 Sealed his lips, and closed his eye:
Who shall build your starry sky,
 Ye that let the poet die?

Ye that called the poet dead,
 And placed a cross above his head,—
From your dark the dawns have fled,
 Ye that called the poet dead.

Ye that kneel beside his grave
 Praying for the light he gave,
Think ye that his clay can save?
 Ye are dust upon his grave.

THE WILL TO SEE

I gaze at earth from off the walls of heaven,
Firm on the battlements by tempest laid,
Where, in the storm, I set the lampads seven
Whose gleam is into darkest chaos rayed.
I climb upon the heights of what may be,
And in that effort, lo, this glorious world
With its green lands and its far-flashing sea
Is to the trembling of my gaze unfurled.

AND THE WORD SHALL BE MADE
MAN

Yea, many wandering truths have come to me
From distant lands, and ages long since gone,
And I have bowed before them reverently
For all their faces with the vision shone.

And some were kings, and wore a crown of gold,
But others crept all ragged in attire
As if their strength were feeble, chill, and old;
Yet every eye was passionate with fire.

But one there is for whom I still must wait
In blinded night, and in the barren day,
And even now the hour is drawing late—
Or thinkest thou that he has passed this way?

And when he comes this nation shall at last
Take up the spirit of its mighty dead,
And of its mountains, and its prairies vast,
And of the stars that guard it overhead.

And when he speaks this nation shall be one,
And deathless fire shall flash in every eye,
And it shall drive the chariot of its sun
With triumph-chant across the ringing sky.

FREEDOM

My freedom is a torture cell,
My peace the rack of thought.
Was it for this that past the stars
My soul to life was brought?

Is it for this the dawn grows bright
Above my prison walls?
In through the grated pane its ray
Upon my darkness falls.

And is this really manhood's task
When birds sing in the tree,
To suffer in the cell of thought
Where eyes can scarcely see?

'Tis true that I thereby have found
The beauty of the sky,
Only through one small window crack
And with a dazzled eye.

Before my birth the widest skies
Ensphered my paradise;
I made me coronets of stars,
I flew where dawns rise.

But I was blind, although I saw
With empty angel's sight
The glorious universe unrolled
In its eternal might.

And so it was not till I came
Into this stifling cell,
That I first saw the fire of stars
As from a deep sunk well.

It was not till these prison walls
Enclosed me where I lie
That I was free, a man, a god,
Tortured and taught to die.

LIKE THE FALLING OF EYE-LIDS

How long I stood there I know not, but mine eye-lids lifted as from the sleep of ages, and I found myself upon the dimness of a lofty mountain with a candle in my hand.

And as I breathed and knew not where I was, the flame of the candle grew more and more radiant, so that I cried in the courage of light: "Now but a little while, and I shall see all!" For the height of the mountain-peaks was about me, and the depth of the valleys lay at my feet.

And then all unseen, and felt only on the warmth of my forehead, there came a dark wind which made the candle flicker so that its wax grew cold between my fingers. And then like the falling of eye-lids, like the drifting of clouds, the hills and valleys vanished from before mine eyes, and my heart sank.

Darkness—but all silent and without a name; it had no lips, it had no eyes, there came no thunder crash, no terror of pain; and so I stood and waited for the voice, for how could light come into the darkness, and how could light go again into the dark? But there was no answer. And I knew only that my heart was freezing to stone. And there were no hills.

So I cast my eyes at the candle, at the gasping flame, and watched it dwindle slowly, until only the wick stood red.—I held my lips tight-shut lest I breathe it out.—Slowly before mine eyes it smouldered black, until the last spark was charred, and only a thin blue smoke was left, and that rose slowly, and curled, and was gone—

Pray thou for me.

THESE SOLEMN DAYS

How darkened are these solemn days
Of slow deliberate truth,
And O, once more for the singing ways,
And the dizzy feet of youth
To risk once more the rainbow stair
Which up to the heaven soars,
Or into the flaming dawn to dare,
Seeking its golden doors.
But who now walks with the brave bright
sun?
Or his calm pale sister the moon?
Or who through the purple courts hath run
Where the treasured stars are strewn?
But the old man liketh his cell of clay,
Safe, and far from the skies,
And the stars he can see them from far away:
Hath not the flesh their eyes?
For the old man trusteth that he can find
The truth if you let him stay,
But the sun it dazzles the young men blind,
And the wild wind leads them astray.
O, save our souls from these darkened days,
O, save our souls from their truth!
And out once more on the singing ways
With the dizzy feet of youth!

THE VOICE OF A HERETIC

My pride is in the calloused hand,
And in the sweat-crowned brow
Which bribe of heaven nor threat of hell
Can never make to bow.

I am the army yet unsung
Without a battle-cry.
I only ask for bread, more bread—
With that content to die.

My God is but the power of steam,
And may his kingdom come;
I pray for that with speechless toil
Until my arm is numb.

And if you ask me why this creed,
I only bid you turn
To the soft white-handed men of God:
I bid you look and learn.

My work is damned to ugliness
Before their dainty sight,
My body's sweat, yea, speak it out,
Is in their world a blight.

And shall I therefore kneel with them
Betraying all I love,
Betraying God, I mean my God
And not your God above?

O God of steam, it is your eye
Which finds my work divine;
You never sleep, you never scorn,
Heed then this prayer of mine.

This prayer, I say, I mean my life
My brutish toil and pain,
The ugliness that others mock—
May I not pray in vain.

I SAW THE CITY GLEAM

I saw the city gleam in the morning light,
Its first white smoke adrift in the azure sky,
And all its daring towers rise sparkling bright
Into the stainless air—serene and high.

I heard the message of its crystal morn,
The clangor through the still air ringing clear
Of worlds new-made, and life again reborn,—
And brightly leapt the tumult and the cheer.

I saw the city at the end of day,
Its gloom of smoke about it like a shroud,
And thousand candles shot their sudden ray,
But still its iron heart was beating loud.

And now the city sunk in star-lit rest,
Great Titan, which has stolen heaven's fire,
Breathes into sleep, the vulture at its breast,
Hark! Midnight chimes from some still
wakeful spire.

SHALL YE FIND OUR LORD

Ye that go to Paradise
When ye seek the Lord,
Who is there in Paradise
Can not see the Lord?

Ye that go to Arcady
When ye wish to sing:
Is there then in Arcady
One that cannot sing?

Ye that go among the dead
Seeking after truth,
Even fools among the dead
Gather up the truth.

But ye come to living men
Seeking only bread,
God awaits in living men—
But ye ask for bread.

Go ye then to Paradise,
Stand before the Lord:
Can it be *your* Paradise?
Shall ye find *our* Lord?

WHEN NIGHT FLEW O'ER THE SPARS

My ship had left a little land,
And on a mighty sea
The giant-hearted days and nights
Clasped hands to cover me.

The boundless universe, it seemed,
Had wrapped me in its space,
And I like a child upon its breast
Gazed dimly at its face.

Above my head I saw the dawns
In silent victory,
Go marching up the dark to trail
Their banners over me.

But not the dawns alone, the noons
That burned with golden waves,
I gloried when their hearts caught fire
Within the day's blue caves.

And then the sunsets, awed with death,
That drowned so gloriously
Their flaming foreheads in the deep,
They gave their souls to me.

But far more wondrous and more hushed
When night flew o'er the spars,
Then in the height I scanned the bright
Bewilderment of stars.

IN THE SURFACE OF ALL

Over my head is a roof
As the rain knows and the snow;
Over the roof is a sea,
Where I saw the swift bird go,
And over that sea is another sea
More dark and far;
And high in the surface of all
Glitters a star.

THEIR DWELLINGS ARE AFAR

My thoughts float near like unseen half-heard
winds

That touch me in the laughter of their play,
And as my hand gropes out, but never finds,

I hear the rustle as they flit away.

For who can touch the lashes of a star?

Or who can steal the sunlight of the air?

They are not ours, their dwellings are afar,

Beyond our surest laws, and waiting there

They tease our strivings till a mortal dies,

And then they snatch the blind-fold from his eyes.

I THANK THEM FOR THE MUSIC
THAT THEY GAVE

With sudden flight of birds that twittered gay
My singing hopes to other trees have flown.
Why should they stay? My autumn leaves are
 strewn
Upon the frosty ground. Why should they stay?
For other trees are green wherein they may
Sing out their madrigals in joyous tone,
Forgetting winter, and the autumn moan
Which drives the withered leaves in droves away.
And shall my heart turn bitter? Far from so.
I thank them for the music that they gave
When sap of spring worked magic in my limbs,
And though it saddens me to hear them go
I listen still, and when I find my grave
May their dim echoes chant my dying hymns.

IN AUTUMN DAYS

Blue are the autumn days,
White is the autumn cloud,
Swift are the autumn leaves
When autumn winds shriek loud.

Dead are the summer flowers,
Flown are the summer skies,
They with their summer suns
Glitter in paradise.

Kind was the summer's dream,
Keen is the autumn's chill,
Savage the winter's wrath
Ramping behind the hill.

Soon comes the flying cloud,
Soon shall the trumpet blow,
Then with its vengeful glee
Shall whirl the winter snow.

THE BOND-BURSTING LAUGH

It's time that we laughed with a bond-bursting
 laugh
As we gallop along,
While our hearts feel strong.
It's time that we threw back our heads just to
 quaff
The deep joy of living,
The deep joy of giving
Our souls to the wind to do what it will:
Our souls to the stream beneath the bridge
 flowing,
We thunder across and then up the hill;
Through the shade of the oak tree
The sun of the sky;
I turn in the saddle, catch sight of your eye,
And I think of the sigh
And the bonds of despair
That it gave to me once;
But that is forgotten, and that is o'ermastered,
 deserted behind:
All the meanness of care,
And the sin of the mind
With which I was cursed.
Throw your head back and laugh
For the bonds are all burst.

THE BLINDNESS OF THE DAY

Into our dark a dawn will leap
When we have gone away,
And through the pathless night will sweep
The blue revealing day;
Till men within a realm of light
Will gaze with careless noon-day sight
O'er what we groped for in the dark
With only soul-fire for a spark.
And through the fields we wandered blind,
And past the springs we tried to find,
And o'er the graves we left behind,
Proudly the men of light will go
Boasting "The truth at last we know,"
When we have gone away.

Yea, men at last shall know the light;
And is not light more perfect sight?
And is not truth the world revealed,
Which from our blindness was concealed?
And yet they know but half, for we
The meaning of the dark could see
When stars thronged our eternity,
Which they in light can never find.
For lo, the dawn shall make them blind,
When we have gone away.

So past our dark the dawn may leap
When we have gone away,
But through our visioned night shall sweep
The blindness of the day.

THE BRIDGE

I built a bridge from the sun to the moon,
Its rampart dizzy with stars:
I stood in the sun at its flaming door,
My hand on its golden bars.

I looked through the dark till I saw you come,
Still half-afraid of the fire,
No wonder—for through the empty dark
Its blazing joy leaped higher

Till it wrapped my soul and it touched my
heart
And burned me to the core,
And I scarcely knew that the bridge fell down:
I needed its stars no more.

THE LETTER KILLETH

“The living live, and the dead are dead.”
So ye march with your heavy tread:
Keep to your ranks, nor turn your head—
“The living live, and the dead are dead.”

Darkness is light, but what care ye?
Your tread has proven it cannot be,
And life is death and death is life,
And joy is sorrow and peace is strife,
And the purple hill is ever beyond,
And they that are free must live in bond,
And they on earth must in a star
Live in a distant hope afar—
Live in a star where they have not been—
Yea, and see what they have not seen,
Even as dumb men laugh and sing,
And the lowest clod is crowned a King
And smallest children are proven wise
And lame men climb to the highest skies.

Yet ye march with your heavy tread,
“The living live, and the dead are dead.”
Keep to your ranks, nor turn your head,
Proving its truth by your very tread,
“The living live and the dead are dead.”

THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

The rythm of centuries, the rhyme of years,
And all the dawns that bring the glad refrain
Hark to the singing, ye that are born with ears
Lest He who wakens chaos sing in vain!

THE GLORY OF BIRTH

And are thy wakenings glowing as the dawns
Which take their cloaks of gold and mount the hills,
And silver-sandalled haste across the lawns
And up the ridges where the snow-peak chills
Until upon the top, firm-footed in their zeal,
They raise their torch above the prostrate night?
And like the fervor of a thunder-peal
The wild aurora souled in cloud rolls bright
Into the deep serenity of sky,
And with the impatient splendor of its light
Chases the stars which loyally and high
Guarded the night in many a watchful band,
While far below, beneath the jagged height,
Beneath the battlements where dawns stand,
No valley in its poverty of dark
But sees the splendor glitter at its feet,
And not a wave that does not steal a spark
And not a sea that does not gleam to greet
The arrow-glances of the dawns, which raise
Their torch-arms higher, and yet higher still,
God-hearted at the entrance of their ways,
That all the blind abyss with light shall fill.

And are thy wakenings glowing as the dawns?
And do they drive the wan stars from the sky,
And haste on silver sandals past the lawns
To place their foot upon the mountain snow,
While one last vengeful wind of night
Blows savagely across the vale below
And flings thy cloak of gold in tumult bright?

The snow is flushed, the mountain-torrents roar,
The mists melt from the valley, and the sea
Lies dazzled by the glitter of its gold.
Is such the path thy wakenings spread to thee,
When from thy dark the dream is first unrolled?

THE GRANDEUR OF DEATH

And are thy dyings like the passing days
Which, when their eyes grow dim, about them
spread
Their youthful cloak of gold, and once more raise
With their last strength their torch above their
head?

—This as they glide upon their funeral pyre,
A shining ship across the western sea—
And lo, the sparks have set the sails afire,
And up to heaven leaps the victory.

And on the shore the people shield their eyes
To see the mighty ocean all ablaze,
To see great flaming galleons in the skies
Careen and sink into the azure ways.

And even when the glowing embers fade
The skies shall tingle for the grandeur still
In all the splendor of their stars arrayed
Which through the farthest gloom of chaos
thrill.

THE BEGGAR

I will write no verses to-day;
From its blazing threshold the sun
Hath scattered its gold in my way;
I will walk till the daylight is done.

I will lie on the sweet-smelling grass
In my hunger to eat my bread,
Watching the clouds as they pass
In the azure seas overhead.

Beggar with thoughts in the sky,
Ragged among the flowers,
Earth-born and doomed to die,
Living eternal hours.

THE WAYS OF WONDER

The ways of wonder through the world,
The bird that startles the dusk to sing,
The rainbow into the sky of tears,
And out of the snows, the spring.

The ways of wonder through the world,
Life mounting up like a column of light
To guide us under the thunder peals
Into the starless night.

THE SPIRIT

I raise the flashing sword
To cut the world's last knot,
The binding, rankling cord
That holds us from our lot.

I poise the flashing sword:
Its sharpness knows no peer,
Its edge is yet unscored
With the jagged dents of fear.

I sweep the flashing sword
And darkness reels dismayed,
For what of death can ward
The swiftness of its blade?

“ART IS LONG”

You have heard the jest which they turned to a
song,
That life, it is short, but art, it is long,
When life is as long as the road to the sky,
And art is as short as the wink of an eye,
So we laugh at the jest, with the joy of the sun,
For life runneth on, but the art it is done.

ON THE SANDS

Onward we walked still never speaking, step after step, though tugged by the wind. And ever the sky wakened more azure ahead and the sands of the beach were more dazzling, and ever the waves came racing and tumbling and thundering upon the shore only to crawl back seething and grasping. And ever the sea-wind, sun-bright and salty, whirled the whipped spray-drops wet on our cheek.

Down by the lip of the wave, snow-white and trembling glittered the foam-spume stained with the rainbow. And the flight of the sea-gulls flitted in shadow under our feet.

Then did we turn from the drouth of the soft-crunching sand down to the wave-beaten wet left by the tide, where sometimes the stealth of the up-flooding wave came to our feet, cooling and playful.

And ever the cries of the gulls, and the shriek of the wind in the beach-grass, and the shatter and thrash of the surf dinned in our ears.

Our faces were stiff with the salt, our eyes were a-dazzle, and the rough wind snatched at our clothes. Thus to the point we arrived through spray-drops a-sparkle, and gazed far out to the rim of the wave-breeding ocean, hearing the shout of our thoughts, our lips pressing dumb.

THE STARS OF SPRING

The winter nights
They shiver with stars,
And the summer nights
They dream,
And the autumn nights
They stare with stars,
With a calm and steadfast beam.
But those deep-passioned nights of spring,
Bright with a thousand stars they sing
Which reel in many a festal ring
With pure ecstatic gleam.

I CALL FROM FAR WITH THE
EVENING STAR

Between two flashing rivers
Beyond the setting sun
I call from far with the evening star
To say that my goal is won.

And you in the darkening meadow
Gaze up at the trembling ray:
Your dreams float near, but can you hear
The words which it has to say?

Or is it merely a sparkle
Which the spirit of beauty there
Hath hung in the night like a tear-drop
bright
To make the dark more fair?

Nay, dream not that stars have fallen
So emptily into space,
They are a part of each mortal heart
Sphered in the one embrace.

JOY

*And so it was that the heavens rocked
For the singing of the stars,*

For joy is deeper than any sea,
And joy is higher than any sky,
And joy is crowned with eternity
And joy can never die.

And joy can live in a grain of sand,
Or build itself a palace bright,
A universe with the perfect hand
Of its undaunted might.

*And so it was that the heavens rocked
For the singing of the stars.*

RAIN—OCTOBER, 1914

“Close up thy book, put out the light,
And throw a log on the fading fire,
For at the window tappeth the rain;
Our old grey ghost is back again.
It seems as if he will never tire
From wandering darkly through the night.”

A chill in my bones! is that then he?
He never speaks when he comes in,
For his ways are grey, and his hand is cold,
Though his heart is that of a child, I'm told,
And so I wait for him to begin,
As he sits by the fire-side thoughtfully.

For he always brings a tale to tell—
Whether of ships in the misty sea,
Or of the city streets at night
When street-lamps in the puddles are bright;
And I thought to myself, “What shall it be?”
(While slow from his hat the rain-drops fell.)

“Many deeds I have done, ” he said,
“Errands of mercy, errands of pain;
I have pattered on the roofs of men
For ever and aye since God knows when,
But to-night my fingers have a stain:
The blood of men, the touch of the dead.

“Priest I have been to those who die
On the battle-field with a writhing pain,
Kneeling to their confessions low,
Trying to cool their fevered brow;
And as they passed they thanked the rain,
For only a ghost had dared come nigh.

“And one there was whose eyes were dim,
And he reached to clasp this hand of mine,—
‘My faithful comrade tell my friends
To fight for me, my battle ends.’
And I kissed his lips, and made a sign
I would do his bidding. I prayed for him.

“Strange new task for a ghost so old,
Washing the sin of the dead away,
Making their blood-stained fingers white.
Watching above them in the night!
I with a lip that can not pray!
I with a heart forever cold.”

A silence! I turned and found him gone,
And the fire blazed up as the new log caught,
And tap, tap, tap at the pane
As he passed on his endless path again;
While there we sat in a trance of thought,
And I lighted the light, for I felt alone.

A DREAM

Where is the hand that can paint it,
Where is the tongue that can tell it—
The vision I saw last night?
When we were lost in a mighty darkness
Where the heavens are wider
And the stars brighter,
A wind as secret as the blackness,
As limpid and cool as the white stars,
Was blowing past us.
I could see it lifting your hair
Which streamed dark behind you
In the scant light.
And I raised my head and gazed with terror
 into your eyes
Where the rays glanced.
And I took the star which they had given me.
I raised my hands with it,
Holding it by the golden chain
Fast in my fingers.
And I bound it on your forehead
So that you shone through the whole night.
And I bowed my head,
And it seemed that clouds were sweeping by
 me
Till I felt the darkness grow darker
Though I dared not look.
Then I raised my eyes and the skies burst
 serene
And a thousand voices sang
And upward we soared,
You with the star on your forehead.

THE STIRRUP-CUP

The road grew dim, the stars had come,
But my horse still galloped strong,
And my tired mind began to dream
Of the way behind so long,
For each man has his hour of dusk,
When he sings his even-song.

But I roused myself, and in the sky
I watched the slow moon creep,
And my thoughts flew up beyond the stars
Into the shoreless deep;
And I dropped my eyes: a light ahead!
At last the *Tavern of Sleep*.

So into the cobbled court I rode,
And the post-boy caught my steed,
And the good host stood in the lighted door,
"A welcome, my friend, indeed!
For a merry company is here,
And all that a heart can need."

And I heard them singing as I drew nigh;
I had heard their songs before,
And my heart grew warm for the very sound
As I strode to the tavern door,
And all that leaden weariness
Weighed on my limbs no more.

"And who may these be?" I asked the host,
But he only shook his head;
"There are many come to my tavern here,"
Was all that the good man said.
And just then they stopped, and their laugh-
ter rang
Till it wakened the dusty dead.

Does a man lie down in the Inn of Sleep?
Are its rooms all dark and drear?
Nay, rather he sits with his bosom friends
In blazing fireside cheer.
The windows are black, he can see the stars
If close to the pane he peer.

But ever again I racked my brain:
Surely these men I know!
And so I beckoned and asked the host
As he busied him to and fro,
But a friend called "Wine," and nodding his
head
After it he did go.

And the wine was a wine of a warmer land
Which made the room all bright,
And made me sing, as I sang then
With them through the live-long night,
Till in at the window shone my doom:
The grey of the morning light.

And sad it was to bid farewell,
And never their names to hear,
They were such ancient childhood friends
And they must have seen my tear,
For one of them uttered a single word;
Like a flash it all was clear.

O friends who had given their lives for me,
Never, never again
Would I forget so ungratefully;
My heart was stung with pain;
And I would ride and sing through the world
Making their story plain.

So hot with resolve I ran to the court
Till the host cried in dismay:
"You've forgotten your stirrup-cup, my
friend—
It comes at the break of day.
For each man drinks a draught of it,
Or ever he goes away."

I pulled the horse back on his haunch,
Till the sparks sprang from his hoof.
"And hurry, hurry," I cried to the host,
"For dawn burns over the roof,"
And the host ran out with a stirrup cup:
"This is my friendship's proof."

"But hurry, hurry!" I cried to him,
"For I can not wait to tell
Something you can not understand
That in this tavern befell."
And the host he gave the cup to my hand:
"Drink it! I wish you well."

"And why must all drink a stirrup-cup?"
I asked as my lips I wet,
And I drained the cup, and handed it down,
Till mine eye with his eye met;
His voice was low, but my blood ran cold
—I can hear the echo yet—
For thus he spake as the dawn leaped bright:
"It maketh a man forget."

MY WILL

Here is the will of all I own
And live by and hold dear:
Cast lots for what the thieves can find
But this, at least, revere.

My hopes I give unto the winds
That blow to God knows where,
And may they never lull to peace
Or weary to despair.

My joy I borrowed from the sun
To light me through the gloom;
I give it back, and may it burn
Until the crack of doom.

My sorrows to the night I give
To make its darkness deep,
For through the terror of its sky
Brightly the stars must creep.

My wonder to the dawn I give,
When the world is made anew
And the wind sweeps free from out the sea
And the hillside shines with dew.

And to the smooth, unrippled pools
In which the clouds go by
I give my laziness that loved
To dream beneath the sky

And last unto the anguished beasts
I give my rasping songs,
For never unto bird or man
Their dumb distress belongs.

BY A BEAT OF THE HEART

By a beat of the heart—I know not how—
It seemed that I opened my eyes—
I entered a limitless realm of light
And fared to its farthest skies:

Even from where at the world's first dawn
The glad stars, one by one,
Were singing out their fervent lives
To greet the rising sun
To where, from high on a mountain peak
Far under the thunder gloom,
I could see the immortal heavens rage
With the quenchless fires of doom.
For I could stride over births and deaths
Without the chill of fear,
For this was heaven, and I was slain
Death could not follow here.

And so when time's great blow is struck
And clay is proven clay,
Still in that realm which the heart-beat gave
I shall live in an endless day.



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